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ABSTRACT

Following a study of the educational needs of adults in the State of Washington, the 1967 Washington Legislature passed the Community College Act of 1967, which established the community college system. It was expressly stated in the purpose of the law that community services of an educational cultural, and recreational nature, and adult education should have equal emphasis with transfer courses and occupational education. The 1969 Legislature made the Community College System responsible for virtually all adult education in the state. Adult education was .3% of the total college program in 1963-65, whereas in 1968, it was 2.85%. There are six adult education categories that are approved for state support. The programs that have been initiated provide courses that extend from those who have little or no education to those who have spent a lifetime in formal training. (DB)

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THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A LIFETIME: A LOOK AT CONTINUING EDUCATION AND WHAT THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE DOING ABOUT IT

By

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A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A LIFETIME: A LOOK AT CONTINUING EDUCATION AND WHAT THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE DOING ABOUT IT

What is in a name? We can call it lifelong learning as the English do, continuing education as we do in North America, adult education, or even education for the aged. Lifelong learning is descriptive and has a nice sound, but to some it seems a bit folksy, and to others it would smack of a sentence to hard labor. Adult learning may sound presumptuous, and since post secondary education is becoming exceedingly difficult to divide into age category, may not be accurate. We needn't even discuss "education for the aged." In the State of Washington, and in general, for the United States and Canada the term continuing education has been adopted in official usage as the term to apply to that community educational service for those who have graduated from high school or have reached the age of eighteen. In this context an adult may be defined as a person: (1) employed or employable in a full time occupation; (2) retired because of age, disability, or personal choice; (3) is a housewife; (4) has assumed responsibility for himself and/or for others.[1] Washington Community Colleges may accept anyone over the age of eighteen, or sixteen with the consent of the local high school principal.

> The great adventure of adult life is infinitely more engrossing, more baffling, more implicated with the possibilities of pleasure and pain, of success and failure, than any world cruise. You may not be captain of the social craft in which you journey, but you can be captain of your own inner life and of the expression you give to it.[2]

How one goes about this job of living will depend on his values and his interpretation of those values. Learning plays a pre-eminent role in his

development or disintegration as a human being. In one form or another the continuing education of adults can determine success in mastering the problems of personal maturation and social relationships. Everyone needs to feel he has some purpose in life. He seeks some kind of fulfillment. Some look for material things and the security they will bring. Others seek the social world with its mutual support in fellowship. Still others pursue intrinsic knowledge for its own sake. All are ambivalent creatures. Everyone desires to be individualistic, and yet a part of society.[3]

Through adult education man can develop and master an adaptability to change. To catch up, keep up, and to forge ahead are proper goals for adult education. The world is changing and the adult has specific responsibilities as a citizen in an evolving society. The schooling the adult received during his younger years is not sufficient to maintain his position as a citizen of a democratic society. The schooling he received in his youth is not sufficient to satisfy his curiosity of the world about him. As he lives, a desire to know more about life is not satisfied by his former education, however much that may have been. Thus education is a continuous process.

There are many lists prepared by many authors and agencies as to the expressed purposes of those undertaking adult education. Roger Axford has provided a rather comprehensive one:

"1. To make up for the deficiencies of incomplete earlier schooling. Here the goal is usually stated in terms of the accomplishment of some formal certificate such as a diploma or a degree.

"2. To extend and develop further an interest which is already held.

"3. To meet personally felt needs:

"a. A better, broader, and more integrated viewpoint.
"b. Greater understanding of civic affairs.
"c. Better personal adjustment to increasing age.

"d. Better health.
"e. More effective adjustments in home life and family relationships.
"f. Greater social effectiveness.
"g. More effective discharge of social responsibilities.
"h. Vocational advancement.
"i. Higher social prestige.

"4. To fulfill a compulsory requirement set upon the individual from outside.

"5. To follow a conscious pattern of maintaining a breadth of view.

"6. To carry on a habit."[4]

To add to this list is another reason suggested by Axford in a poem written by a Milwaukee student at the University Extension Division, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee:

Liberation

I've registered! I've done it!
I can't believe I'm going,
But like the mail I'll get there
Come rain, come sleet, come snowing!

It's fifteen years since I was wed,
And for the last eleven
I've cooked, I've cleaned, I've babysit
From seven until seven.

And though I love my offspring,
Three females and one male,
And though I love my husband,
My mind is getting stale.

From speaking just to children
From morning until night,
From grocery lists, from ironing
From hearing kiddies fight;

From "Yogi Bear," from "Popeye,"
From "Captain Kangaroo,"
From football games and baseball games
From household bills now due.

And so, despite the many frowns
I quench my thirst for knowledge
One night a week - oh, joyous night
This mother's going to college!

Anonymous[5]

These reasons reveal that students reflect the values of our philosophic discussions. They also reveal that a stereotype still vaguely present in the public's mind of an adult class held to teach immigrants the ability to speak and write English has largely vanished, except the occasional one in large centers of population or in particular circumstances such as areas in the Southwest or New York for the Puerto Rican people, or in times of crises such as Cubans in Florida, and for the Hungarians fleeing to the United States during the revolt of the fifties.

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) composed a social profile of an adult student as slightly more often a woman than a man, typically under forty, completed high school or more, has an above average income, works full time and most often in a white collar occupation, is married and has children, lives in an urbanized area, but more likely in a suburb than in a large city, and is found in all parts of the country, but more frequently in the West than in other regions.[6]

Almost all adults have specific educational purposes which they hope to satisfy by attending school. While intellectual and cultural motives apply to school attendance almost as much as occupational goals, vocational objectives appeal more to persons between the ages of twenty to forty than to younger or older persons. Employment is a more decisive factor in influencing the attendance of men than women. Women, especially married women, attend classes to gain mental stimulation. Lower income people preparing for vocations believe school is necessary for success. Adults with little schooling emphasize earning power and development of skills. Those with much formal education are stimulated more by cultural motivation and need for mental stimulation.[7]

A study of the influence of socio-economic class upon adult education participation reveals some interesting data. Scholastic performance is not associated with participation in adult education, but liking school during one's student days and having wanted to continue schooling is positively associated with attendance. Feeling a lack of education does not seem to be a strong motivation for continuing education. The important factor in adult participation is one's own socio-economic position and the style of life associated with that position. The prevailing way in which adult educational programs are advertised tends to discriminate against the working class adults because of the way in which they secure information about continuing educational opportunities. Low skilled occupational strata tend to find out about opportunities from personal contacts while the white collar worker will learn about them from the mass media. Manual workers tend more often than others to view education as an activity for children and adolescents, and not for adults, using such excuses as: "could not afford it," "I'm probably too old," "I feel childish going out to classes at night." Whether by design or demand adult education classes may appeal primarily to the middle class thereby lowering participation rates for those less educated. Unemployment workers have the lowest participation rate in spite of having more free time. This can possibly be explained by the fact that unemployment often leads to a psychological sense of helplessness, apathy, and virtual inability to make the effort. If men hold positions requiring continuing education, they will take courses to help them on the job. Interestingly enough almost all professional men have taken at least one adult education class in their career. In this consideration it may be worthwhile that industry design work so that it will require further learning, and perhaps plan work release programs or monetary remuneration as a stimulus for further training.[8]

The effects of age is an important factor in planning the curriculum of a community college. As the interest and needs of the individual change with increasing age, the amount of participation and the kinds of courses students will want to take are bound to shift. In a study of 1,726 adults enrolled at Grays Harbor Community College, Harris found that age had a more reliable relationship to the nature of adult participation in continuing education programs than the occupational index level. In his study the shift from learning for vocational development to learning for leisure as individuals grow older was consistent with many reports in other literature. His findings indicated that age was the single best predictor of the nature of the courses in which adults would participate.[9]

Armstrong made a study of adult students in Washington in 1965 in four course categories in six different age groupings.

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Types of Classes by Age Groups

Age of Students	Commercial	Industrial	Academic	All Other
Under 21	14.4%	10.3%	17.5%	10.5%
21-30	28.2%	44.8%	27.9%	33.6%
31-40	28.4%	20.3%	22.7%	24.8%
41-50	22.5%	17.4%	19.3%	17.5%
51-60	5.7%	6.5%	8.2%	9.4%
Over 60	.2%	.4%	3.3%	3.5%

While he does indicate the nature of courses in the "All Other" category it may be assumed that there would be courses in leisure time activities, culturally directed, or short courses in specific interest levels. His findings indicate a dramatic drop in participation in any type of course after fifty and indicates a possible need for study why this is so.[10] This is becoming more important than ever before because more older people populate

the United States than ever before. "Representing almost nine percent of the total population, seventeen million persons are 65 years of age or older."[11] By 1970 the number of persons over 65 is well over twenty million. Interviews with senior citizens and experience has convinced Washington Community College officials that senior citizens would rather take part in regular classes than to be separated out.[12] Courses of general interest to those after 55 seem to be:

How to Enjoy Retirement Years
Financing Retirement
Sex after Sixty
How to Travel and What to See
Health and Recreation for Seniors[13]

Some of the difficulties in education for the senior citizen seem to be: lack of self-confidence, difficulty of transportation, lack of motivation, physical disabilities, and health. But on the other hand, the increased life span and the lengthened time of possession of mental faculties indicate that studies must be carried on to prevent a waste of human resources and encouragement of a happy useful life among an ever increasing segment of our population.

> Provision of programs of adult education can hardly be justified unless adults are able to profit from them. It is less than a half century since the belief was commonly held that adults cannot learn and that the time for education is limited to childhood and youth. Researches reported over the period of the last several decades have done much to dispel this stereotype of adult inability to learn.[14]

DeCrow made a comparison of adults and undergraduate students on the university level finding that adult students do equally well and are perhaps slightly superior to undergraduate students in learning performance. In learning ability, without exception, adults showed equal or superior ability.[15] Koo's survey of the subject in his comprehensive work on the junior college

student concludes that there is little change in the primary ability to learn through the adult years up to senility.[16] Implications of these studies showing that adults have ability to learn, and that the same time there is a dramatic drop off of adults in classes after sixty would seem to indicate that efforts must be made to motivate elder citizens to the challenge of knowledge and mental activity. Many achievements on the frontiers of learning have been done by men and women after their sixties or seventies. It is worth the effort to encourage those who have the time, the knowledge, and the experience to continue mental activity both for the sake of humanity and for their own sake.

In 1965 the Legislature of the State of Washington directed the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to prepare a comprehensive report and plan for the organization of community college education in the State. The State Superintendent decided to ask an independent research firm to undertake the study and recommend a policy plan. Arthur D. Little, Inc. was selected for the assignment. To assist men with a tremendous backlog of national experience in the junior college field were secured to serve as consultants. These were: Dr. George Hale of the University of Michigan; Dr. Ray Jastrum, University of California; Dr. Leland Medsker, University of California; Dr. S. V. Martorana, State University of New York; and Dr. Basil Peterson, President Emeritus of the Orange Coast College. Dr. William H. Crawford of Washington State University acted as Coordinator for the State Superintendent.[17]

Among the other aspects of the report was a strong recommendation for continuing education. They began by stating they had found no rational statement of policy concerning the objectives of the State's program of adult education. There seemed to be no consistent pattern of organization or intent to the course offerings in this area. Public school districts, junior

colleges, and vocational-technical institutes appeared to regard adult education as something of a side line and felt that their major function was the education of youth who were about to go on to higher education or to enter the job market. The report considered the training and retraining of adults would become the most dynamic sector of demand for community college education in the State. Adult education could not be regarded as a marginal sector of the State's educational system, and the community college must prepare to meet the needs of the adult population. Many of these needs would be occupational in nature. The report felt that in the next decade a large part of the community college operation must be directed toward providing for adult needs for specific job training and also for general education.

It was obvious to the makers of the report that the educational needs of adults in Washington would not merely be limited to job-specific concerns. Their reasoning was that our economic system had made upward mobility a practical, everyday reality rather than the subject of merely ideological debate. How people live, their style of life, what they buy, and how they spend their time are matters of increasing concern in American life. As a result, they believed that there would be a growing demand on the part of adults of the State of Washington to look to education for answers about how to live, and how to spend their time and talents.

The writers commented that in the past this had been defined as a "citizenship educational function" of the community colleges. This term has civic and political connotations which fail to comprehend many of the things for which adults in an era of increasing leisure and affluence would be seeking from education in order to make more meaningful lives for themselves. For this reason an ever increasing number of adults would look to the

community college to provide them with opportunities and guidance in recreational activities, avocational interests, and cultural pursuits.

The reporting staff felt that there was as yet too little recognition in Washington of this educational demand on the part of adults. "If the community college was to be fully responsive to the educational requirements of the population of the State, it must set as one of its objectives the task of developing the kinds of educational programs responsive to these dynamic and emerging needs."[18]

Undoubtedly influenced by this report the 1967 Legislature passed the Community College Act of 1967 establishing the community college system of the State of Washington and expressly stated in the purpose of the law that community services of an educational, cultural, and recreational nature, and adult education should have equal emphasis with transfer courses and occupational education.[19] The 1969 Legislature made the Community College System responsible for virtually all adult education in the State. But even before all adult programs were transferred from public schools to the community colleges, adult education had increased continually. In 1963-65 adult education was .3 percent of the total college program. In 1965-67 it had increased to 1.3 percent of the program and in 1968 was 2.85 percent. Six colleges added extension coordinators to their staffs in 1968 in an effort to increase programs and extend them throughout their districts.[20]

The State Board for Community College Education has rather clearly defined adult education categories which are approved for state support and those that are not. Six categories are approved:

"1. Instruction for adults, or out of school youth which can be credited toward the usual elementary or high school diplomas granted by the school district.

"2. Adult classes pursuing planned learning goals as a continuation of formal education.

"3. Adult classes dealing with specific problems or concerns of the family.

"4. Americanization or naturalization classes conducted for aliens preparing for citizenship.

"5. Courses designed to increase the occupational proficiency of the participants, or to assist in adjustment to changing job responsibilities.

"6. Vocational educational courses approved in accordance with the Washington State Plan for Vocational Education."

Four categories are not approved:

"1. Classes mainly recreational in nature.

"2. Hobby classes.

"3. Classes for the production of goods for the immediate material advantage of the participant.

"4. Classes organized mainly for community activities and projects."

Appended to these categories was a page of specific courses declared ineligible.[21]

This has not eliminated those ineligible courses from community college offerings nor was it intended to do so. A survey of offerings of a number of colleges in the Washington System indicates that this is no deterrent to imaginative recreational or hobby classes. At the moment, non-contracted part time teachers or "moonlighting" teachers (contracted full time teachers teaching extra classes) are paid nine dollars and twenty-five cents an hour while the college estimates a 20 percent cost of administration. Non-approved courses generally require a minimum and a fee that will vary depending on the number of hours the class is held and the cost of class furnished materials. For example, Spokane District 17 Adult Education Classes (non-approved for support) typically run for twenty hours, require a

minimum of fifteen students, and cost twelve dollars and fifty cents plus whatever materials the students must bring for themselves. Each college has its own variant of time, and individual courses will sometimes vary also, but basically all arrive at some method of finance.

Course offerings in the various college programs are as varied as human imagination and desire. To attempt to describe or categorize the types of offering is beyond the limits of such a paper as this. As one continuing extension director stated, "If you can get the minimum enrollment for a class, we'll provide the teacher and the classroom." Recreation, leisure time, hobbies, social knowledge, exotic courses such as oriental cookery and calligraphy, languages for travel, health, real estate, insurance--they go on and on. To visualize the extent of the number of these types of classes and the number of persons participating, a few statistics should be given. Community College District 17 in 1970 had 336 classes with an enrollment of 5,723 students in 31 locations other than the two college locations. Over 15,000 students were enrolled in all evening classes in the district during the year.[22] Over 100,000 persons were enrolled in adult evening classes in the fall of 1969 throughout the State.

Regular evening classes (regular credit classes--transfer and occupational) are financed with State support money and a tuition charge regulated by the State Legislature. State support is allocated by converting student class into full time equivalent enrollment and the college receives its support on the total FTE of all its students regardless of the time or place of offering. Each college is required to charge a tuition of eight dollars and thirty cents per credit hour. Most colleges have a minimum enrollment for each class, generally ten, but this figure could be lowered by

circumstances. Since most classes have more than ten enrolled, a class with a light student load could supposedly be carried by those with a heavier enrollment since it is the total number of FTE/s which provide a basis of State support.

Each community college offers a program for those who have not completed high school and desire to do so. Students are required to meet at least the minimum requirements for graduation as established by the State of Washington. In some areas there are other requirements as well. For example, in Edmonds Community College students under twenty-one are required to meet the graduation requirements of their local high schools. In Spokane, students under eighteen are required to have the permission of their local high school principal and are generally required to graduate from their own high school. This is an effort not to interfere with public school financing except where circumstances as determined by the local public schools are determined to warrant it. Tuition costs vary from twenty-two dollars per subject plus necessary books to no fee at all. In those where tuition is charged, provision is made for those who show financial need.

Another area of endeavor is the Adult Basic Education Classes which are designed to meet the needs of any adult regardless of his educational level. They aim to improve the total educational, social, and cultural level of any individual. They may in addition help adults prepare to take the General Educational Development Test (GED). Since these classes are financed by both state and federal funds, there is no tuition fee, and materials are furnished.

An interesting innovative program offered by Community College District 17, and so far only by them in the nation, was the development of a television program of fifteen half hour programs to prepare an interested adult to take

the General Educational Development Test. Students may obtain the accompanying workbooks prepared by the instructor for five dollars a set and then may take the examination when they are ready. The entire program was expensive to prepare but is being used throughout the United States and has more than repaid the cost of preparation. Additional sets of tapes and reprintings of the workbooks are added as rental fees are paid to the district.[23]

The 1971 Report to the Governor from the State Board of Community College Education was primarily a report on the progress of the community colleges towards its six year plan for 1971-72.[24] It has established as the second objective a program to increase the number of off campus locations to facilitate continuing education. A good start has already been made as evidenced by the fact that in 1968 there were a total of 686 evening off campus sites while in 1971 there were 1526, almost double in the space of three years. This perhaps would help account for the fact that there were 19,947 students enrolled in community service courses. It is to be remembered that this does not include students in regular credit courses.[25]

One of the most difficult age groups for the continuing education effort to reach is the very senior citizen. This is not because of an unwillingness to provide programs or even lack of effort. Rather it is because of the characteristics of the age group. Poor health, lack of mobility, lack of self confidence, and a feeling that life has passed them by contribute to a downward spiral of motivation. It is a saddening experience to see the loneliness, the feelings of futility and uselessness, the wasted vacant days that, all too often, old age experiences. It would seem that more effort should be made to study this problem and devise ways of making the elder citizen a happy contributing part of society to the very end.

Throughout our nation the problem of the native Americans to adjust to contemporary life is a frustrating one for him and for all of us. Sincere efforts have been made but progress is disappointingly slow. It may be that the continuing education program of the community college could make a bigger effort to provide a solution and it just might well be the vehicle to provide some answers. The study initiated in Spokane in October 1972 was a beginning attempt on the part of the community colleges to study ways and means of helping the Indian to help himself. This effort should be continued.

One of the facts mentioned in this study was that the continuing education student tended to be a person of the "white collar" class and better educated than the average person. Two reasons for this have been suggested. One would be that perhaps courses are offered which appeal to people of this socio-economic class. Research should be conducted to see what types of programs might stimulate the "blue collar" worker to attend adult education courses, and what ways could be developed to overcome his reluctance to participate in further education. The other problem in this connection seems to be how to effectively reach this type of citizen to inform him of the opportunities available. He is not particularly amenable to mass media communication. Not that he cannot read, but for some reason it doesn't enter his mind that the message is for him. Mailings direct to the household seem more effective than newspaper advertisement or television or radio announcement, but it still lacks the effectiveness of personal contact. Perhaps new ways of utilizing industrial personnel services and distribution of announcements through such means as an ad on paychecks would help. Encouragement through monetary advancement and by means of released time would help.

Perhaps unions could be persuaded to take a more positive role. A study should be made to encourage participation.

Washington community colleges have come a long way since the report of 1966 chiding the State's seeming lack of program for adult education. The State Board for Community College Education has taken a very active interest to increase the opportunities for continuing education both in breadth and depth. The imaginative programs that have been initiated provide courses that extend from those who have little or no education to those who have spent a lifetime in formal training. They are not content with just providing the subject. They are making tremendous attempts to bring the course to the student. The subjects are student centered courses in an effort to give the student what he wants. At the same time they are not afraid of innovation so that new and more effective ways of learning may be developed. Washington has been judged by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education as one of the seven "pacesetter" states, but it is not content to rest there. The Six Year Plan for Community College Education in Washington is evidence of a commitment to do better.[26]

ENDNOTES

[1]Richard Lee Harris, "An Analysis of the Relationship of Age and Occupation to Adult Participation in the Continuing Education Program of a Rural Community College " (Ed.D. Thesis, Washington State University, 1972), p. 5.

[2]Roger W. Axford, "William H. Lighty - Adult Education Pioneer" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1961), p. 70.

[3]Paul Bergevin, A Philosophy for Adult Education (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967), p. 160.

[4]Roger W. Axford, Adult Education: The Open Door (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Co., 1969), p. 24.

[5]Ibid., p. 22.

[6]John C. Johnstone and Ramon J. Rivera, Volunteers for Learning: A Study of Educational Pursuits of American Adults (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1965), p. 8.

[7]David H. Nicholson, Why Adults Attend School: An Analysis of Motivating Factors, University of Missouri Bulletin 56, No. 30, Columbia, Missouri, 1948, pp. 20-22.

[8]Jack London, "The Influence of Social Class Behavior upon Adult Education Participation," Adult Education Journal, 20(Spring, 1970)140-155.

[9]Harris, p. 75.

[10]Leslie Howard Armstrong, "A Survey of Adult Education Classes in the State of Washington" (Ed.D. Thesis, Washington State University, 1965), pp. 66-67.

[11]Axford, Adult Education, p. 12.

[12]Separate interviews with a Community College Curriculum Director and a Supervisor of Continuing Education, June 29, 1973.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Leonard V. Koos, The Community College Student (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1970), p. 401.

[15]Roger DeCrow, Ability and Achievement of Evening College and Extension Students (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1959), p. 3.

[16]Koos, p. 426.

[17]Arthur D. Little Inc., "A Policy Plan for Community College Education in the State of Washington" (Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia Wn. June 30, 1966), p. iii.

[18]Ibid., p. 37.

[19]Washington, Community College Act of 1967, Session Laws (1967), 28B.50 p. 7.

[20]1969 Report to the Governor - By the State Board for Community College Education (Olympia, Washington, 1969), p. 7.

[21]Washington, State Board of Education Code of Rules and Regulations, 72-4--200, pp. 4-5.

[22]Report of Continuing Education Extension Director of Community College District 17 to the State Board for Community College Education, Spokane, Wn., May 20, 1970

[23]Interview, June 29, 1973.

[24]1971 Annual Report to Governor - By the State Board for Community College Education (Olympia, Washington, 1971), p. 4.

[25]Ibid., p. 17.

[26]Ibid., p. 24.

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